

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-12 are rejected. Claims 1-3 and 5-10 are herein amended. No new matter has been presented.

Objections to the Claims

The claims are objected to because they include reference characters that are not enclosed within parentheses. Applicants further note a typographical error in claim 9, where “insecting” should be “intersecting”. Applicants include corrections to claims 1-3 and 5-10.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by JP 10-155546 to Hideo (sic: “Ikeda”).

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 2-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Ikeda in view of Blass 6,325,626.

The Examiner admits that Ikeda does not specifically disclose the body and sub-body being different from each other, and are made of synthetic resin. The Examiner concludes that it would have been obvious to have made the apparatus of Ikeda with the main body and sub-body being different from each other; and made them of synthetic resin as taught by Blass so as to respectively enhance the flexibility under stress; and optimize the strength of the handle.

The Examiner admits that Ikeda does not specifically disclose the main body and sub-body being configured as claimed. The Examiner concludes that it would have been a merely obvious matter of design choice to make the different portions of the main body and sub-body of whatever form or shape was desired or expedient.

Applicants' Arguments

Applicants respectfully disagree with the above rejections and submit that the cited references, alone or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all of the claim limitations.

Described below is the difference between claim 1 of the subject application and Hideo.

The Examiner contends that "Hideo... is provided with an engagement portion (7) filling the lateral hole so as to surround a periphery of the bent portion".

However, the member identified with reference numeral (7) in Hideo is a push stick (construction tool) for opening the horizontal hole (8) reaching the hole (4) in the handle part 5 and concurrently for bending the brush rod 1. This push stick (7) is removed after it is used for the aforementioned purpose. By removing the push stick (7), an interdental brush with the hole (8) can be obtained, as shown in Figs. 4 and 5. This is apparent from the description in paragraph [0009] of Hideo.

Specifically, the push stick (7) serves as a tool in the interdental brush taught by Hideo, not the member constituting the interdental brush. In other words, the interdental brush taught by Hideo, once it is completed, does not include the push stick (7).

Therefore, the push stick (7) of Hideo does not correspond to the engagement portion (52) filling the lateral hole (43), as in the present invention.

In brief, the interdental brush taught by Hideo does not comprise the engagement portion (52) described in the present invention.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

WESTERMAN, HATTORI, DANIELS & ADRIAN, LLP



Kenneth H. Salen
Attorney for Applicants
Registration No. 43,077
Telephone: (202) 822-1100
Facsimile: (202) 822-1111

KHS/adp